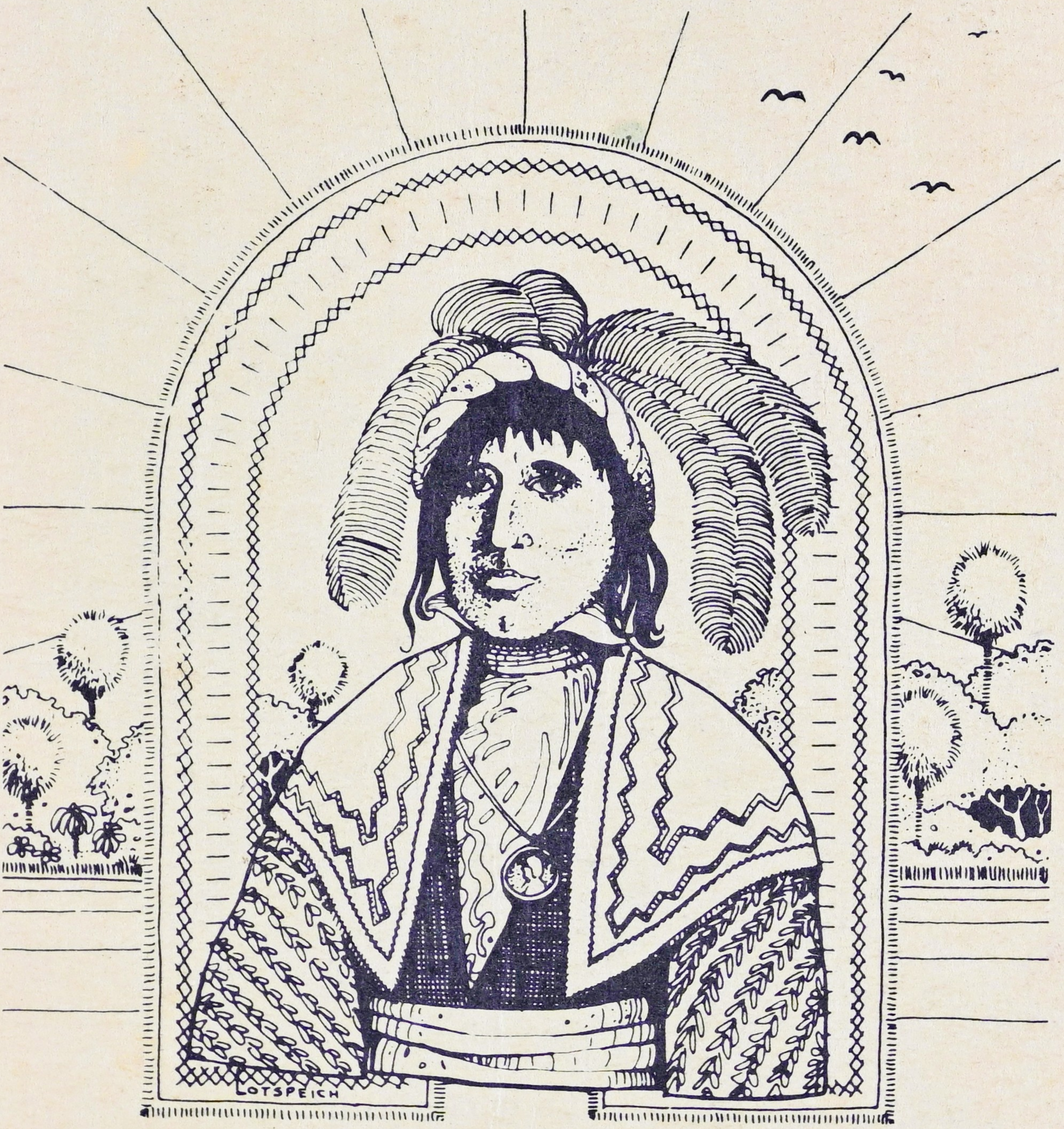
HISTORIC MICANOPY
1821



MICANOPY
Chief of the Seminoles
1812 - 1847

150

HISTORIC MICANOPY, FLORIDA

1821

This information about Micanopy and the location of buildings and sites was put together by Mrs. Lewis B. Smyth (Carmen Whiting) with the generous help of Miss Lillian Merry (descendant of the early settlers) and Mrs. John B. Watkins (Caroline Barr), the author of "The Story of Historic Micanopy."

Many of the buildings described here are private residences and are not open to the public. Please respect the privacy of the residents and their property and environment.

HISTORY

UNDER FIVE FLAGS:

SPAIN 1513 - 1763	Indian village of Cuscowilla
ENGLAND 1763 - 1783	Micanopy area and the Alachua Savanna mentioned in William Bartram's "Travels"
SPAIN 1783 - 1821	Arredondo Grant, September 3, 1817. Area opened for settlement
U.S. TERRITORY 1821 - 1845	Trading post established by Edward M. Wanton. Settlers built around post
*SEMINOLE WAR 1835 - 1842	Ft. Micanopy built near Lake Tuscawilla; Chief Micanopy was head of the Seminole Nation
STATEHOOD 1845	Florida became the 27th State in the Union

Although Florida was a Spanish colony since 1513, and an English one for twenty years, settlement in the interior began with the participants in the Arredondo Grant. Micanopy is the oldest town in inland Florida not on a waterway.

Edward M. Wanton established a trading post at the Seminole Indian village of Cuscowilla in 1821. Settlers brought in to prove the Arredondo Grant settled around the trading post, called "Wanton's." Later the growing town began to be known as Micanopy, after the Chief of the Seminoles. During territorial times, there appeared in postal records "Wanton's Alias Micanopy," and eventually the name Wanton was dropped. The area began to develop as a center of trade for cotton planters.

After statehood, middle Florida experienced rapid growth, and with the opening of new land, better roads, and the railroads coming in, many settlers and farmers were attracted to this area. It became known as a citrus and vegetable center.

In 1850 the division of Section 26-11-20 was mapped as the Town of Micanopy. It was incorporated in 1880.

From the 1850's to the early 1900's, this is the era spoken of as "The Old Town." When the Bank was organized in 1906, it was a very prosperous town.

Many beautiful two-story homes, most with porches and "octagons," surrounded by well-kept gardens, lined the shady streets. Religion has been a mainstay of the community since 1823 when a Methodist mission was established by a circuit rider, the Reverend John L. Jerry. Later came the Baptist, Presbyterian, Episcopal and other faiths who also built churches. Most of these early buildings have been destroyed by fire through the years, many re-built, only to be lost again to fire.

Scenes of a gracious way of life come to mind as we wander down the shady lanes and catch glimpses of the thriving village that was the Micanopy of yesteryear.

SELF-GUIDED TOUR

Center of town is at the curve on Town Square where Cholokka Boulevard meets Ocala Street. The old part of the village of Micanopy was the southern part, around Town Square and Ocala Street. Wanton's Tráding Post is thought to be in this area, although the exact location is unknown.

1. MERRY HOUSE. Oldest known house in town. Front rooms are part of original house built by Dr. James A. Stewart; underneath house are hand-hewn sills put together with wooden pegs. The home was enlarged through the years, with two sand-rock chimneys. In 1917 John Merry added a front porch with an octagon on NE corner, and porches all around.

2. TERRITORIAL WELL. This old well was declared "territorial" by experts at the U. of F., dating from the first American settlement.

   *To the right towards Lake Tuscawilla, there was a town park, with two streets leading down to the lake. Town had a beach, picnic tables, a baseball diamond. Site of Leaning Oak, a local landmark.

3. SIMONTON HOUSE. Dr. James A. Cooper built the original house, facing south. Present Victorian home built by James Simonton in 1912. Two magnificent magnolias at head of the driveway were planted by Dr. Cooper about 1860.

† 4. APOTHECARY SHOP. Built in 1853 by Dr. Cooper and son-in-law, Augustus Mathers. Later known as The Old Reliable Drug Store. An original dodger (flyer) dated 1853 was still in existence in 1976. A wing was built on Apothecary Shop, which later became the Palm Inn. The first Post Office was in this building as it was a stage stop. Later the first telephone office was located here.

†Designates site of building described no longer there.

† 5. PALM INN. A large two-story house, famous for food and hospitality around the turn of the century. During stagecoach days, the route led into Micanopy from the west along Seminary Street to the Town Square, and this was a regular stop for passengers and mail.

† 6. JOHNSON HOUSE. This was the site of another large two-story home, painted white, with white picket fence. A hand-dug well in the yard is still in existence.

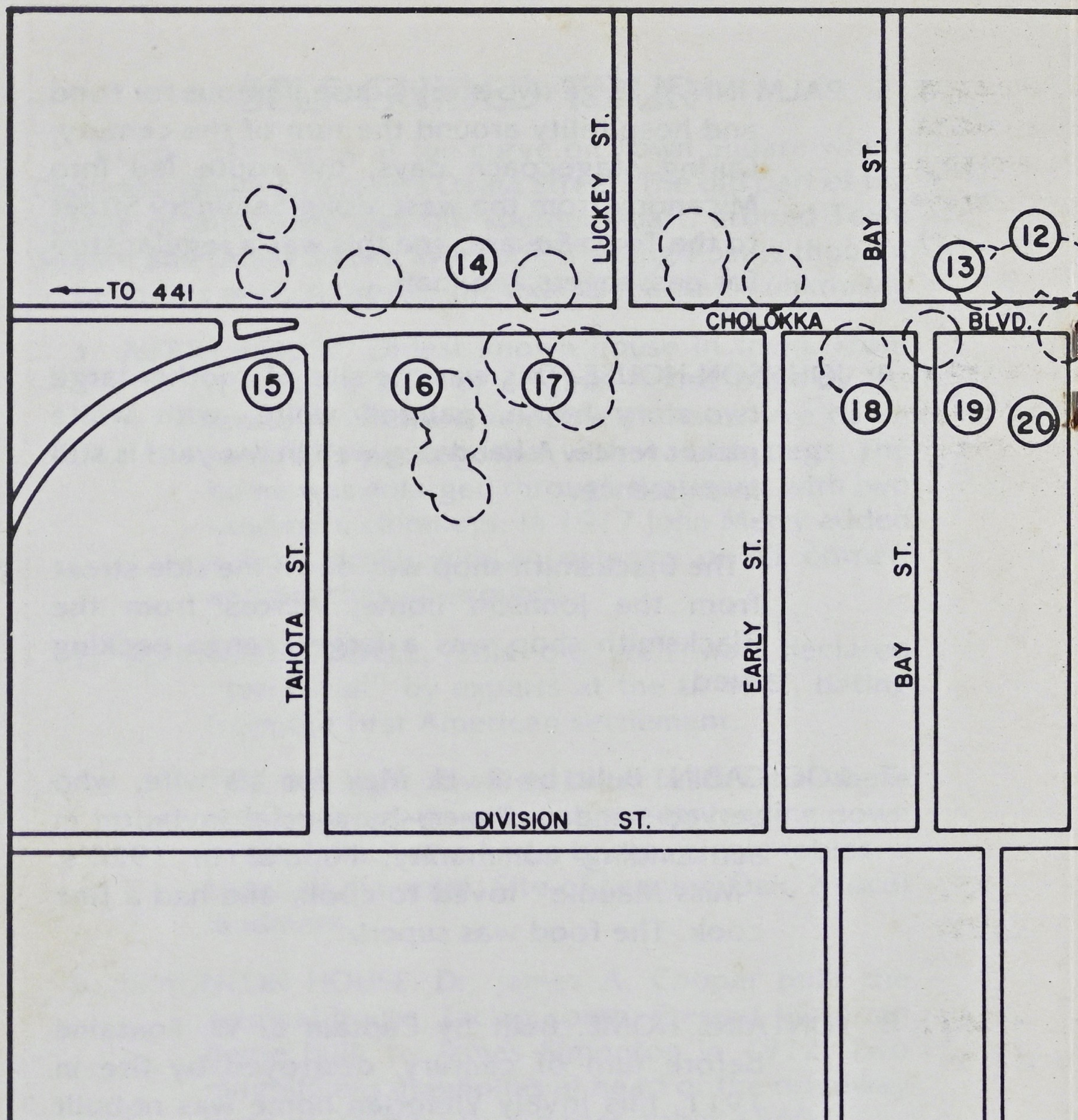
*The Blacksmith shop was down the side street from the Johnson home. Across from the Blacksmith shop was a large orange packing shed.

7. LOG CABIN. Built by R. H. May for his wife, who served Sunday dinners by special inviation in surrounding community. Popular in 1920's. "Miss Maudie" loved to cook, and had a fine cook. The food was superb.

8. FONTAINE HOME. Built by Captain B. W. Fontaine before turn of century, destroyed by fire in 1911, this lovely Victorian home was re-built on same location. Captain Fontaine also built a 2-story brick mercantile store across the street, now gone with the years.

† 9. GRIST MILL. The mill was down from the Fontaine home, built on the slope to pond. Here corn was ground to make meal, grits and feed for livestock.

†10. AVENT HOME. Site of the Avent home, another beautiful big two-story house, long-gone.


TOWN of MICANOPY
north
TO 441
LUCKEY ST.
BAY ST.
CHOLOKKA
BLVD.
TAHOTA ST.
EARLY ST.
BAY ST.
DIVISION ST.
OG
12
13
14
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LMH

HUNTER ST.
OLD 441
11
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4
3
2
1
22
23
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24
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26
27
28
29
PEACH ST.
MAGNOLIA ST.
42
OCALA ST.
30
32
ST.
SEMINARY
SMITH ST.
33
34
EOHEE ST.

11. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. Built in 1858, organized 1854.
EPISCOPAL CHURCH. Mission started 1855.

12. MASONIC LODGE. Built in 1951, Micanopy No. 29 F & A.M. organized 1852.

13. J. E. THRASHER STORE. This was a popular general store, built around turn of the century. Also had livery stable. On adjoining corner is very old warehouse, originally an orange packing house, according to Mr. J.E..

14. NEW BAPTIST CHURCH. Built in 1963. Old Baptist Church is on Smith Street.

(Turn around at end of street)

15. OLD SCHOOL-HOUSE. This used to be the little red school-house, used for primer grades in 1920's (now painted white, has small porch).

16. POWELL HOME. Second oldest house still standing. Built soon afater War Between the States by Captain Benjamin W. Powell, who bought heart-pine and built a plain and comfortable home.

17. BRICK SCHOOL-HOUSE. Public schools in Micanopy go back to 1869. The cornerstone of brick school-house by Lamisophian Institute was laid by Micanopy No. 29 F. & A.M., on May 8, 1895, for "God and Little Children." An addition was made in 1912, and the building was remodeled and enlarged in 1923. Now the Town Hall.

18. WHITE HOUSE ON CORNER. Built around turn of the century, notice dormer windows.

†19. LAVENDER INN. (where Post Office is now) Boom-time building with rooms and restaurant.

20. OLD THRASHER HOME. Built by Chitty family, this lovely two-story home was later purchased by the father of Mr. J. E. Thrasher, Jr., and his family grew up here. Mr. J. E. is now 92 years old. The second story was taken off some years ago.

21. HERLONG HOUSE. The original wooden house was built by R. S. Stoughton, one of the early settlers. Purchased by John Simonton who had a mercantile business, the house was later renovated by his son-in-law, Z. C. Herlong, in the colonial style in 1915.

22. BEULAH FRANKLIN PARK. Site of old Fontaine Mercantile Store. Park given to Friends of the Library by Mr. Ben Franklin in memory of his mother. Gazebo built with funds from Fall Harvest Festival, with assistance from Friends of the Library and others.

23. OLD BUTCHER SHOP. Later Strobles Dry Cleaners. Present owner of brick two-story business and home, Mr. Buster Mountain, states it was built "way back there."

24. AREA OF SHOPS AND STORES BUILT IN 1900's. Site of May's General Store on corner, Mountain's Garage, Barber-Shop and Daily's Drug-store and Hotel.

25. FEASTER BUILDING. Originally the Johnson Block. Dr. W. C. Johnson was a practicing physician, also engaged in truck farming. First floor had 2 stores with storage on second floor, had freight elevator. The second telephone office was on the second floor, with a room for the night operator to sleep.

Third floor was the Opera House, which offered fine entertaiment. Operas, plays, Chautauqua, etc. Local people were called into help with props. Trains brought travelers and "drummers" to town, several hotels sent their buggies to stations to meet trains.

†26. BENJAMIN AND CATES STORES. For many years a drug-store, then a Millinery Shop. In later years, the Micanopy Fur Trading Company was on corner, then a Barber Shop and Pool Hall, and the Post Office.

27. MICANOPY BANKING COMPANY. Established in 1906 by Mr. J. J. Barr. A handsome red-brick building, with the marble and iron grills of the teller's cages still intact, its large vault fascinates all visitors.

†28. CHITTY STORE. Site of a large brick building, where the old garage is now. To the south of it were wooden frame buildings; one was a large one for meetings. William Jennings Bryan spoke here during his campaign for the Presidency.

†29. DR. MONTGOMERY'S OFFICE. The Doctor's office was on the corner, with a rear entrance around the corner. The stable was in the rear where he kept his horse and buggy.

(Turn right on Ocala Street)

†30. BARR HOME AND PAYNE GROVE. Site of oldest orange grove in this area, developed by Dr. George Payne, a physician, one of the earliest settlers. Dr. Payne sold his property to John J. Barr in 1853. Mr. Barr built a beautiful two-story home with lovely gardens beneath the Twin Oaks.Legend has it that these were the council oaks of Chief Micanopy. The Barr home burned in early 1920's, and was rebuilt in the Spanish fashion by his son-in-law, Dr. J. D. Watkins.

†31. LOCATION OF CHIEF MICANOPY'S CAMP. It is said that his camp was on the North West side of Lake Tuscawilla beside a small pond. It is shown on an old map as the Barr Pond.

32. OLD BAPTIST CHURCH. Organized in 1852, the first church was built about 1860. The second church was built in 1880 and was the site of the organization of the Women's Missionary Union in 1881.

†33. MONTGOMERY HOME. Site of a lovely large home which burned (the third house on this location to burn) with beautiful gardens and orchard. Old brick wall was built with ballast bricks from English ships.

34. MICANOPY CEMETERY. Many of our pioneer settlers sleep here beneath the spreading oaks.

(Turn back to Seminary Street)

35. METHODIST CHURCH. First church built in 1859, burned in 1880's. Second church of Gothic design was built in 1895, with a tall spire. This burned in 1933 and was replaced with present church.

36. OLD JAIL. This is a small building in back of present-day Water Works.

†37. EAST FLORIDA SEMINARY. Organized 1852 as a girls' school. Site of several large buildings which made up the Seminary. They faced East. The T. and J. Railroad ran on the other side; the tracks only recently taken up. Southern College at Lakeland has memoriabilia from the old Seminary.

†38. STATION-MASTER'S HOUSE. Built by John Wideman in 1890's while he was principal of school. Later purchased by J. J. Jones, Station-master at T. and J. Depot.

39. T. and J. DEPOT. The T. and J. permitted the A.C.L. trains to use their turn-around.

40. OLDEST SCHOOL-HOUSE. Built in 1869. The small house with porch located by creek was first school-house.

†41. TUSCAWILLA HOTEL. Originally the home of the large Riggs family. Became known as Tuscawilla Hotel prior to 1891. Name changed to Pardee House in 1901, owned by the W. B. Turners (Miss Honor Pardee).

†42. CAROLINA INN. Excellent food, especially remembered for its Christmas dinners and the butler nicknamed "Carolina."

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MICANOPY
FALL HARVEST FESTIVAL, INC.
1979